

ESTUARIES & COASTAL WETLANDS OF LAKE SUPERIOR

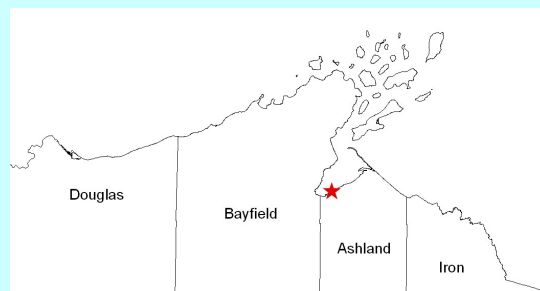
Bay City Creek

Approximate Size: 10 acres*

Ownership: City of Ashland/ Private

Year Last Surveyed by WDNR/NHI: 2012

GLCWC Classification: Open Drowned River Mouth



Ryan O'Connor



Amy Staffen

Site Description

The mouth of Bay City Creek is a small wetland embedded within a power plant industrial complex in the City of Ashland. A paved recreational path crosses the creek approximately 200 meters upstream from its mouth and volunteer paths dissect the wooded headland. This site's significance lies in its importance for urban water filtration and flood mitigation, recreation, research, and education. The quality of the natural communities occurring here, namely Submergent Marsh and Northern Sedge Meadow, is low.

The water near the mouth of Bay City Creek is brown and slow-moving or stagnant, supporting a Submergent Marsh with a moderate number of aquatic plants, including Eurasian water milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), water celery (*Vallisneria americana*), Richardson's pondweed (*Potamogeton richardsonii*) and leafy pondweed (*Potamogeton foliosus*). Narrow-leaved cat-tail (*Typha angustifolia*) and soft-stem bulrush (*Schoenoplectus taeberniamontani*) emerge along the creek margin and dense patches of dogwood (*Cornus spp.*), willow (*Salix spp.*), and box elder (*Acer negundo*) hang over the creek edges, which are slumping into the creek in places. A small, sandy embayment and beach are located just southwest of Bay City Creek and support a very low diversity Emergent Marsh composed of soft-stem bulrush, arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia var. latifolia*) and water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*). A narrow and heavily disturbed dune dominated by large willows divides the sandy embayment from the creek mouth and is host to many invasive species.

Threats

Erosion along the shoreline in tandem with upstream inputs have impacted water quality as evidenced by high levels of fecal coliform bacteria sampled in the water after rain events. Invasive species, including sweet clover (*Melilotus spp.*), common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*), and spotted knapweed (*Centaurea biebersteinii*) along recreation trails, common and glossy buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica* and *R. frangula*) and exotic bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera*

*Area includes lower 0.125 miles of creek, bay and associated wetlands.

X bella) in the wooded dune, purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), and reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) in wetlands and Eurasian water milfoil in the channel all threaten to replace native vegetation, reducing already low native biodiversity.

Additional Comments

In 2010 the Chequamegon Bay Area Partnership (CBAP) along with Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College and the Ashland County Land and Water Conservation Department built a series of rain gardens designed to filter run-off water before it reaches Bay City Creek, providing an excellent example of the type of restoration needed in this watershed.

Abbreviations and Helpful References

GLCWC - Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Classification. glc.org/wetlands/pdf/wetlands-class_rev1.pdf

WDNR Coastal Wetlands webpages - <http://dnr.wi.gov>, Keyword: "coastal wetlands"

WDNR/NHI - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Inventory Program.
<http://dnr.wi.gov> , Keyword: "natural heritage"

CBAP - Chequamegon Bay Area Partnership. <https://www.northland.edu/cbap.htm>



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Emergent Marsh (left) lines the edge of the channel while dense brushy areas (right) overhang it.

Suggested Citation

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**WISCONSIN COASTAL
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

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